

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 16833 102003Z

64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-19

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 OMB-01 SS-20 NSC-07 DODE-00 DRC-01 /119 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0735

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 16833

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, XG, ETRN, FR

SUBJECT: SPECIAL REPORT BY NATO BOARD OF AUDITORS

REF: USNATO 3799

1. AS DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS SUBSTANCE OF USNATO'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN REFTEL REGARDING RESULTS OF CEPS AUDIT, WE RECOMMEND IT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS BEARING ON TACTICS OF BRACING FRENCH ON ISSUE OF SPECIAL PAYMENTS.
 2. FIRST, THIS ISSUE IN PAST HAS BEEN HANDLED ON "TECHNICAL", NON-POLITICAL BASIS. IN OUR VIEW THIS HAS BEEN CORRECT APPROACH, AND IT SHOULD BE CONTINUED IF WE ARE TO AVOID POSSIBILITY OF ADVERSE IMPACT ON CONTINUED USE OF DONGES-METZ PIPELINE UNDER US-FRENCH BILATERAL AGREEMENT.
 3. SECOND, WE SUSPECT CHANCES OF ACHIEVING SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION TO ISSUE OF SPECIAL PAYMENTS WOULD BE INCREASED TO THE EXTENT THAT COURSE OF ACTION RECOMMENDED IN REFTEL HAS BROAD SUPPORT AMONG NON-FRENCH MEMBERS OF CEPS. INDEED, WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE THE OTHER ALLIES
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PAGE 02 PARIS 16833 102003Z

TAKE THE LEAD IN PRESSING THE ISSUE, IF THEY COULD BE

PURSUADED TO THIS. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, U.S. FINDS ITSELF ALONE, I.E., IF U.S. CASE IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO WIN ALLIED SUPPORT, FRENCH MAY CONCLUDE THAT WE ARE PRESSING ISSUE FOR REASONS OTHER THAN THE TECHNICAL ISSUES INVOLVED. THIS, IN TURN, COULD (A) HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECT ON RECENTLY IMPROVED TONE OF US-GOF DIALOGUE, AND (B) CAUSE FRENCH TO REVIEW POLITICAL BASIS FOR DONGES-METZ PIPELINE.

4. FRENCH HAVE NOT RAISED CEPS ISSUE WITH EMBASSY, NOR DO WE INTEND TO RAISE ISSUE WITH GOF. WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD REMAIN IN THE MULTILATERAL FORUM. NEVERTHELESS, SHOULD DEPARTMENT AND USNATO DECIDE TO IMPLEMENT CONCLUSIONS IN REFTTEL, WE RECOMMEND THAT TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PARAS 1/ AND 3 ABOVE BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.
IRWIN

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